

Cache Conservation News Spring 2001

*A newsletter of the Blacksmith Fork and North Cache Soil Conservation
Districts*

Every day is Earth Day for Farmers and Ranchers

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

*By S. Bruce Karren, Chairman
North Cache Soil Conservation District*

The economic success of a nation is tied to the success of agriculture. The success of agriculture depends on the economic viability of individual farmers and ranchers. Any farmer today will tell you these are tough times.

Farmers and ranchers face increasingly tough global competition for traditional commodity markets. And they face changing environmental regulations.

Utah's conservation districts are proactive partners in the statewide effort to effectively deal with environmental regulations regarding animal feeding operations (AFOs) while maintaining a viable and sustainable agriculture.

However, the rules are changing. In December 2000, the EPA proposed new regulations regarding concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). These rules are considerably more restrictive and will dramatically increase the number of CAFOs in Utah requiring a regulatory permit to operate. Some of the proposed CAFO regulations include:

- Changing the minimum from 1,000 animal units to 500;
- Removing the 25-year/24-hour storm provision;
- Including immature animals;
- Including the land application area as part of the permit.

These proposed regulations could place undue hardship on many area producers. We encourage you to write your congressional representatives and share your views on this vital issue.

The best government is one which governs the least, but also one in which all citizens are informed and involved. Get involved.

Where to write:

The EPA comment period on the proposed CAFO rule changes has been extended to July 30. You can view the complete document or a summary on the internet at www.epa.gov/owm.afo.htm

Comments can be sent by e-mail to: CAFOs.comments@epa.gov or mailed to:
CAFO Proposed Rule
U.S. EPA Office of Water
Engineering and Analysis Division (4303)
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20460.

or write to your congressional representatives:

Sen. Bob Bennett
431 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Sen. Orrin G. Hatch
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Rep. James Hansen
242 Cannon house Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

EXTENSION CORNER

Drill box survey

Every ten years for the past fifty years a drill box survey has been taken in Utah. Cereal grain seed that farmers are planting is gathered statewide and analyzed for purity, germination, variety verification and possible weed contamination. It has been ten years since the last survey was conducted and a new survey is slated to begin.

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Utah Seed Improvement Association, Utah State University Extension Service and the College of Agriculture, Utah State University, are involved with the project. Randy Sessions, from Morgan County, will oversee the project and write a concluding report for this ten year cycle and the 50 year history of the project.

County agricultural agents have been requested to randomly visit producers while they are planting, draw a quart sample from their grain drill and fill out an information card. One sample will be collected for each 1000 acres planted, based on the Utah Agricultural Statistics book. A spring and fall collection will be required, to match the two planting seasons. Cache County has been asked to collect 25 samples of spring barley, 2 samples of oats, 4 samples of spring wheat, and 18 samples of winter wheat.

Test results will be provided to those producers who request them from the samples they provide. Otherwise, all information will be held strictly confidential and will be used only in the overall report, which helps us measure progress we have made within the last decade and the prior 50 years. No individual producers will be identified in the report.

The information obtained from this survey has always proven valuable to those in the industry who are working to improve production and quality. We trust you will be willing to participate when the planting season begins.

*--Clark Israelsen
Cache County Extension Agent*

Cost-share dollars available for wildlife projects

If you own land and love wildlife, this program is for you.

Cache County recently received federal cost-share funds available through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). County residents who own land and are interested in providing wildlife habitat may qualify.

WHIP provides 75 percent cost-share to participating landowners. Types of projects to be constructed include windbreaks/shelterbelts, upland plantings, filter strips, grassed waterways and riparian forest buffers.

Landowners who are interested in participating can sign up between April 1 and July 1 at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office, 1860 N. 100 East, Logan. For more information call Wayne Greenhalgh, 753-5616, ext. 21.

-- Wayne Greenhalgh, UACD

BOARD ACTIONS

Joint Action

- Conducted inventory of animal feeding operations.
- Provided local teachers with Soil & Water Stewardship Week educational materials.
- Approved an Agriculture Protection Area request from Gene Hiibner.
- Sponsored, along with other partners, "Protecting Our Agricultural Heritage," a farmland preservation workshopp.
- Supported a joint project with Logan City Environmental Division to provide worm composting bins to local elementary schools.

Blacksmith Fork

- Approved conservation plan for John Baxter (revised).
- Accepted Kurt Pinder as cooperator.
- Submitted final feasibility report on regional animal waste composting facility.

North Cache

- Approved conservation plans for Joe Creech, Michael Spackman, Keller Cattle Co. (revised), Bill Oblock, Janet & Robert Borg (revised), Dean Ricks, and Walter Godfrey (revised).
- Accepted Bill Oblock and Dean Ricks as cooperators.
- Approved a comprehensive nutrient management plan for Chris Griffin.
- Completed one Cub River demonstration project.
- Supported proposals for funding for Cache County and for Newton area wildlife projects

EXPLORING THE WEB

Utah State University Extension

www.ext.usu.edu -- Here you will find answers to many questions about agriculture and family life. How can I improve my profits from my beef cattle operation? How do I maintain a healthy herd of milk cows? How can we preserve some of our fruit so we can use it next winter? Is your producer association planning a conference? Check here for the conference facilities and services that are available. You will find information on the 4-H youth program, family life programs, gardens and yards, continuing education and distance education, and lists of publications concerning all these areas.

www.econ.usu.edu/agline is one of the links you will find at the Extension site. The alfalfa and feed grain hotline and the livestock hotline invite you to list the products you want to buy or sell. Click "Markets" and you get links to markets such as the Chicago Board of Trade, Kansas City Board of Trade, and many others. Click "Prices" to get current market reports from Smithfield Livestock Auction, Jerome Dairy Sale

and many more. Hit "Information" for links to other universities, the USDA, Economic Research Service, and farm organizations.

Cache County to host conservation field day

The 17th Annual Conservation Field Day, the 'Got Cow' Tour, will be held May 18 in Cache County.

This statewide event will touch all aspects of the dairy industry in Northern Utah. Participants will learn about the "inputs" to the cow with a visit to a high-tech alfalfa field. They'll learn about the cow herself at the Black & White Days Western Spring National Holstein Show in Richmond. Then they'll tour facilities featuring "outputs" of the cow including milk and cheese. Finally, participants will investigate the other "outputs" and learn about manure management, water quality improvement projects and composting.

The Utah Soil Conservation Commission Annual Field Day is sponsored by five soil conservation districts in Cache, Rich and Box Elder County. Registration forms will be mailed out April 1.

For more information, call the Utah Association of Conservation Districts, (435) 753-6029.

Low-impact street design

Two low-impact streets – in North Logan and at the Utah Botanical Center in Kaysville -- will be built to demonstrate a new low impact design that features less pavement, no cement gutters, and larger naturally landscaped areas to better handle storm water runoff. The design also cuts construction costs within the right-of-way, slows down traffic and makes roadways friendlier for pedestrians.

The designs were developed for North Logan City with assistance from UACD, Stantec Consulting and the Utah Botanical Center.

"These designs provide a standard for rural Utah communities that is a safe street and much more friendly to our rural environment," said Gordon Younker, UACD executive vice president. "The new design will reduce nonpoint source pollution into Utah rivers, streams and canals. It will benefit irrigation companies and cities concerned about maintaining clean water. We hope other Utah cities and towns will adopt this alternative to traditional roadway design,"

--Jennifer Hines, UACD

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Several measures important to agriculture were approved by the state legislature and signed by the governor, including

- SB 66 provides \$400,000 to the Soil Conservation Commission to make grants to owners or operators of animal feeding operations to improve manure management or control surface runoff.
- HB 14 requires certification for individuals who design, inspect, maintain, or conduct percolation tests or soil tests for underground wastewater disposal systems. Individuals who maintain such systems for their own private residences are exempted.
- HB 71 appropriates \$100,000 to the Office of Planning and Budget for distribution to counties and other local governments for developing and implementing land use plans.
- HB 111 appropriates \$40,000 to USU Extension to assist agricultural producers to identify and implement practices that prevent contamination of water by livestock manure.
- HB 144, requires the registration of forest operators and notification by operators of their intent to conduct forest practices on private land. The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands is directed to provide technical assistance to landowners and to promote the implementation of Forest Water Quality Guidelines. Sponsored by Craig Butters.

- HB 244 changes the name of the Electrical Deregulation Task Force to the Energy Policy Task Force. Its duties are amended to study energy needs, to monitor federal and other states' conservation efforts, and to study potential ways the state could develop, facilitate, or promote generation, exploration, or transportation of new energy.
- HB 322, enhances penalties for criminal offenses committed against animal enterprises, including agriculture.

-- www.le.state.ut.us
www.fb.org/utfb

Local Work Group sets goals

The Cache County Local Work Group met on February 1, 2001, to set priorities for this year. The focus for 2001 continues to be water quality within the Bear River System. Group members recommended that Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) project proposals again be submitted for the Clarkston/Newton and Amalga/Benson Areas to address animal feeding operation concerns, along with a new proposal on the Cub River. Proposals will be reviewed and submitted in June.

In addition, the group recommended submission of a Cache Valley-wide Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) proposal. That proposal has been submitted and approved for \$29,000. (see "Cost share dollars" on page __.)

The local work group was successful in securing EPA-319 funds for a few demonstration projects along the Little Logan, Little Bear and Amalga/Benson Areas in 2000.

--Jon Hardman, NRCS

COMING EVENTS

Earth Day celebration, 10:00am to 4:00pm, April 21, Cache County Fairgrounds, Logan

Dept. of Environmental Quality public hearing on Cache County petition to classify aquifers, 6:00pm, Thursday, April 26, in the Cache County Council chambers.

Farm Safety Training and Operator Certification Course (for Youth), April 26–28, at ASTE building, 1498 North 800 East, Logan. Contact USU Extension at 752-6263.

Utah Soil Conservation Commission meeting and Field Day, May 17–18, Logan. Contact Penny Trinca at 753-6029.

Canal liability, stormwater issues are clarified

Municipalities and irrigation companies must work together to solve the problems brought on by urban development and stormwater runoff, three panelists agreed at the March 20 meeting of the Cache County Water Policy Advisory Board.

Historically, as municipalities expanded, they were built to drain into the nearest waterway, which was often a canal. Development brings increased public use of canals and their adjacent "trails", which in turn brings increased risks of serious accidents.

Most irrigation canals were built more than 50 years ago. Most do not have formal easements. Warren Peterson, a Delta attorney, emphasized that those canals should be surveyed and their easements recorded and aggressively defended against encroachments.

Municipalities should require developers to obtain the approval of the irrigation company if any canal is altered by their development. Irrigation companies should establish standards for fences in populated

areas, and work with the communities to require developers to install fences or pipe the canals to reduce the hazards for the new residents.

"Use of a canal without permission is trespassing," said Merrill Bingham, of the Provo Metropolitan Water District. Provo has recently formed a stormwater utility district. Provo has agreements with the canal companies within the city. The city makes annual payments to the canal companies, shares in the canal maintenance, has agreed not to add any new stormwater connections to the canals without the written permission of the canal owners, requires developers to obtain permission of canal companies before altering any canal in any way, and assumes liability for any event that is caused by stormwater in a canal.

Water Board defines mission

"The purpose of the Board is to research, review and recommend policies pertaining to the coordination of water resources, planning and management to insure an adequate, safe, secure, economical supply of high quality water to meet the current and future needs of domestic, agricultural, environmental, recreational, and industrial needs of Cache County and perform such other services as may be required from time to time by the County Executive and County Council."

Objectives (*abbreviated*)

(1) Define the County interest and role in water management matters; (2) inventory available water, and propose a plan to provide water for future needs in Cache County; (3) examine the complex of institutions having water management responsibilities and assess their effectiveness in meeting current issues; (4) use limited resources as catalysts and seed money to leverage and direct other funding to desired County water topics and interests.

Approved in principal by the Water Policy Advisory Board Feb. 20, 2001. Specific wording of the objectives is expected to be approved at the Board's next meeting at 4:30 pm April 17 in the County Council chambers.

Earth Day to celebrate Life

Earth Day is set aside for us to learn and to take actions to sustainably manage our planet's resources. Logan City Environmental Division will hold the Earth Day event from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Saturday, April 21st, at the Fairgrounds. The purpose of the event is to inform the public, form partnerships, and to celebrate life as provided by the earth's natural resources.

Exhibitors will include a variety of agencies and organizations. Activities include a bike race, crafts and games for children, and prize drawings with Q92 radio station. There will be many other activities during the day at different times.

Trash bags will be distributed for a neighborhood cleanup. The focus will be litter pick up, but beautifying yards or properly disposing of one's recyclables is an alternative. Cleanup participants should take their litter bags to the Landfill, where a volunteer can help get materials to their proper places. Hazardous Waste can be taken to the City of Logan Service Center from 9 am to 1 pm.

Volunteers are needed to help facilitate the day's activities. Please contact Jill Galloway of the Logan City Environmental Division's Cache Valley Clean Team by phone at 435-716-9794 or by email at recycle@loganutah.org.

-- Jill Galloway, Logan City

GLEANINGS

The NRCS has released its "Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning Technical Guidance," The guidelines will be used by NRCS and its conservation partners' field staffs, private consultants, and others

who assist AFO owners and operators with the development of their CNMPs. It may also be used by many AFO owners and operators to help them comply with animal feeding operation regulations.

There will be no general CRP signup opportunity in fiscal year 2001. Most Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants whose contracts expire September 30, 2001, may extend their contracts for one year. They will not be required to return the land to crop production to be eligible for enrollment next year.
-- from e-notes from NACD, 1/23/01

Cyber-Sierra's Conservation District Resource Center at <http://www.cyber-sierra.com/area9/index.html> has over 2000 annotated links to conservation information sources with detailed references and valuable information for conservation districts and natural resource professionals nationwide.
--e-notes from NACD 12/5/00

A new conservation organization, called the Bear River Watershed Council has been formed, with headquarters in Logan. Its major interests include the Bear River Range as a corridor for the movement of wildlife between the Uintas and the Yellowstone, and the management of the Bear River watershed.

EPA's National Agriculture Compliance Assistance Center <http://es.epa.gov/oeca/ag/> in cooperation USDA provides instructions on how to comply with agriculture regulations. There is also information on agriculture grants provided by the USDA and the EPA. The Learning Center page offers information for teachers, students and kids.

In the year 2000 some form of conservation tillage was used on nearly 37 percent of the cropland in the U.S., which means that the producers had more than 30 percent residue cover on the ground after planting. The use of no-till systems increased nearly 7 percent nationwide in the last two years.

Because of improved, more efficient irrigation systems, average irrigation water application rates in 1995 were nearly 10 percent less than in the peak water-use year, 1980.
-- NACD News & Views, January/February 2001

NRCS has calculated that more than 400 hours are needed to prepare and implement one comprehensive nutrient management plan.
--<http://www.nacdnet.org/govtaff/tmdl/tmdlimpactletter0101.htm>

CAFO talking Points

This editor is not a farmer. He is not intimately familiar with the day to day operations of the many farms and ranches in Cache Valley. Neither does he know anyone who has been able to read the entire 800 pages of proposed CAFO regulations and determine how they will effect agriculture (see page 1). The editor has, however, read a summary of the proposed rules, and feels compelled to comment on them. If there is an idea or two here that you can use in your own comments to the EPA, you may use it in your own words. The following are my ideas, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any district supervisor.

1. I agree that there is a need for simpler, more easily implemented regulations, but am skeptical of government's ability to simplify anything.
2. Quit changing the rules! By the time producers are able to adapt to one set of rules, the rules are changed. That destroys any good will and sense of cooperation producers may have.
3. Preparation of comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs) is overly time-consuming. There is not enough technical assistance available to handle all the CNMPs that will be required under the proposed regulations.
4. What is the difference between a PNP (Permit Nutrient Plan) and a CNMP? The requirement of two nutrient plans unnecessarily complicates procedures.

5. Making plans and lists of permittees available to the public is an invasion of privacy.

6. Detailed regulation detracts from and dilutes efforts to find permanent and lasting solutions to the problem of waste management, such as composting and anaerobic digestion.

-- C. R. Batten, editor

CONSERVATION CLASSROOM

How to grow a pizza

A working demonstration Pizza Farm in Madera, California, is circular, divided into eight triangular "slices" (like a pizza), and is growing all the ingredients used to make a farm-fresh pizza! Visitors learn about the wheat grown for the crust, tomatoes grown for the sauce, the dairy cows that give milk to make cheese, and even the pigs for pepperoni.

Since it is unlikely that any classes in Cache Valley can tour a Pizza Farm in California, the next best thing might be to visit the Pizza Farm's website at www.pizzafarm.com. There you will find suggested lesson plans and activities that relate to ingredients of a pizza and how they are produced. The lesson plans fit into various courses, such as math, science, and social studies. You can purchase a teachers guide and student activity books.

Many links offer students much more information about their favorite foods and how they are produced. One topic for discussion might be what foods in the supermarket may come from the central valley of California? Or, what are the differences and the similarities between agriculture in California and that in Cache Valley?

We don't have a Pizza Farm in Cache Valley that a class can visit, but dairies, cheese making, beef production, and hay and grain production are important industries here. Class exercises may include interviewing local farmers, learning about the ingredients of a pizza that are grown in the valley or in Utah.

Sterling Scholar finalists

Mountain Crest High School student Gary Ryan Bayles was recently named a Sterling Scholar runner-up.

Bayles, son of Gary and Debby Bayles of Millville, and Clint Ward, son of Keith and Pamela Ward of Richmond, were chosen finalists in the Trade and Technical Education category of the competition. Both have agricultural ties.

Bayles is a senior at Mountain Crest High and Ward at Sky View High School. both competed against 674 other Utah nominees in February. Judges whittled the applicant list to 195 finalists, 12 of whom are from Cache County.

The Sterling Scholar recognition program, sponsored by the Deseret News and KSL Television, recognizes excellence in academic achievement. Winners receive \$1,000 scholarships.

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